

Mayor's Newsletter

A Message from City Hall

June 2012



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Dear Resident,

I am writing to share with you my June, 2012 newsletter.

On May 21st, the Board of Aldermen passed my FY13 budget by a vote of 22-0. The passage of this budget represents the work that was done with the Board of Aldermen, the School Committee, Newton Public Schools staff, our unions, city staff and community members. I am thankful to them for joining me in making the tough decisions needed to put Newton on the right financial and operational path. Also in this newsletter you will read about our Energy Smart Newton program and the additional costs-savings and efficiencies we found by becoming the first community in Massachusetts to procure 100% of municipal electricity from green/renewable sources, through the purchase of renewable energy credits (REC's) to offset the usage of an estimated 70 million kilowatt hours of electricity over the next three years, as well as our receipt of a prestigious Climate Protection Award from the United States Conference of Mayors. Finally, you will read about a special team I have put together at City Hall to focus on community engagement and enhancing the quality of life in all thirteen villages.

I hope you will take a few minutes to read more about these items below.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Setti D. Warren".

Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Budget Passes Unanimously

On May 21st, I was honored that the Board of Aldermen passed my FY13 budget unanimously, by a vote of 22-0. This vote solidified the firm financial footing that Newton is on, and demonstrated that our fiscal house is once again in order.

When I presented my budget last month, I spoke of the game-changing contracts we signed with all 17 unions, efficiencies and cost-savings found through zero-based budgeting, and the outcomes-based approach that we took in crafting this year's budget. I am so thankful to the Board of Aldermen for their partnership in passing this budget so quickly.

The historic contracts with our unions are the first of their kind in the Commonwealth, allowing a 2.5% increase in compensation and health care, equaling the growth rate in our revenue at 2.5%. This accomplishment will see the city save 100 million dollars over five years. This budget is also historic in another way, for the first time in Newton's history, it is directly connected to strategic outcomes that will be measured from year to year using metrics so we are guided by goals and quality of service delivery, not just the bottom line. In addition, thanks to the work we have done, Moody's Investors Service has given Newton a Aaa bond rating and stable outlook. Moody's said at the time that "The stable outlook recognizes the city's improving financial position, conservative forecasting in five year operating and capital plans and implementation of comprehensive financial policies."

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Working together we have accomplished a great deal, but with increased traffic on our streets, growth in our school system and an aging infrastructure, there is much more work to be done. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the months ahead.

To view my FY13 budget, click [here](#).

Energy Smart Newton Continues with Important New Initiative and National Award

Last week, the City of Newton was chosen as a recipient of a Climate Protection Award by the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM.) The USCM issued Honorable Mention awards to 5 communities nationwide with populations of less than 100,000. According to a press release issued by the USCM, the awards recognize "Mayors for innovative practices in their cities that increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions." I was honored to accept this award, another milestone achievement as part of our effort to be the greenest community we can be.

Please click [here](#) to view the press release.

This award follows an announcement I made on February 29th, when we launched the Energy Smart Newton program, an important initiative that takes a three-pronged approach to reducing energy consumption by 20% by the year 2020 in the residential, commercial and municipal sectors.

Since this program began, we have taken great strides toward reducing our carbon footprint across the city. Several businesses have joined the effort, and later this month we will celebrate 750 residential energy audits conducted across the city.

Also as part of our efforts, on May 8th I was joined by Lt. Governor Timothy Murray and numerous business and community leaders, to announce that Newton continues to be an environmental leader in the commonwealth. We gathered in my office to announce that Newton is the first community in Massachusetts to procure 100% of its municipal electricity through green/renewable sources. This agreement was secured through a reverse-auction process, in which we worked with World Energy consultants to secure an agreement with Reliant, a green energy provider.

This agreement includes the purchase of renewable energy credits (REC's) to offset the usage of an estimated 70 million kilowatt hours of electricity over the next three years. The reverse-auction process ensured that we received the best market price available.

This agreement will ensure that the City of Newton will not only use environmentally friendly resources to power every building and street light in the city, but will also save over \$300,000 over the course of the next three years.



Mayor Warren is joined by Lt. Governor Tim Murray on

Tuesday, May 8th, to announce that Newton has procured 100% of municipal electricity from green/renewable sources.

This milestone announcement demonstrates that Newton is leading the Commonwealth with a comprehensive energy initiative that will move the green economy forward. This will reduce our carbon footprint, generate green jobs, and result in significant cost savings in the years ahead.

On the day of the announcement, Governor Patrick said that "We have developed a nation-leading clean energy agenda because it is the right thing to do for our environment, our energy independence and our public health. I applaud Newton for setting an example for communities across the state."

To learn more about Energy Smart Newton, and to sign up for a free residential energy audit, please visit www.newtonma.gov/energysmart.

Community Engagement

Since taking office in 2010, I have worked hard to engage with residents, businesses and non-profit organizations in each of our 13 villages. As part of my firm commitment to community engagement, I recently hosted a breakfast at my office for residents from across the city who are committed to making a difference in their community. I was pleased to be joined by volunteers from NewtonSERVES, our annual city-wide day of community service, small business owners, and members of various neighborhood organizations from across the city. This gathering provided a terrific opportunity to discuss ways we can work together to make improvements to all facets of community life.

I have also recently established a working group consisting of staff and residents to focus on ways that we can work together to improve the quality of life across our city. This group meets on a weekly basis and focuses on improvements to many facets of community life, including improvements to the cleanliness of our village centers, engaging residents and neighborhood organizations, supporting small businesses, and making our city more walk-able and bike-friendly. This group consists of my Community Engagement Director Ana Gonzalez; Elaine Gentile from our Public Works Department, who is overseeing beautification efforts across the city; Linda Plaut from the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs; Amanda Stout, our Economic Development Specialist; Citizen Assistance Officer Aaron Goldman; our Bicycle Coordinator Lois Levin; Pedestrian Coordinator Alicia Bowman; and Andrea Downs, Chair of the Transportation Advisory Group.

In order to make the most of each one of our villages, we need your help. I hope you will take a few minutes to visit the Beautify Newton section of the city website by clicking [here](#). We want

your feedback on how we can continue to make improvements across the city.

If you would like to learn more about these efforts, or are interested in starting or joining a neighborhood organization or Area Council, please contact Ana Gonzalez at agonzalez@newtonma.gov, or 617-796-1100.